BEDOUINS MJ4

excessive heat sets in, the sheep tribes come back to the cultivated zone. Frequently their radius of movement does not exceed a dozen of miles. The members of the sheep tribes are in regular contact with the settled population and practically all of them evince more or less an interest in settlement. 361 233 [166]

2. Semi-Sedentary Tribes

While the semi-sedentary tribes continue to breed livestock, they are already attached to the soil which they cultivate. 361 233 241

Part of the tribe engages in cultivation, while the other tends to the flocks. After the season of ploughing and sowing is over, the tribe gets on the move in search of pastures, leaving behind only the necessary number of men for guard and irrigation duties. Early in spring the semi-sedentary come back to their fields. Right after harvesting they begin sowing the summer crops. They spend the winter and spring in tents; during the summer they live in huts which they make out of trunks and branches of trees. Village settlement is a rare exception.

3. Sedentary Groups

This group is the least numerous and important. The members live in towns and villages like settled people with the difference that they still retain their tribal character. 361

BEDOUINS MJ4

In our days sedentarisation is the product of the nomad's contact with settled society during the regular periods of his encampment on the outskirts of the cultivated land. 166X 177

At present, the tribal population of Syria, Iraq, Palestine (Israel) and Transjordan (Jordan) is in all stages of transition to a sedentary existence. A. S. Kirkbridge has outlined[1] the various stages that the Transjordan nomad passes on his journey to the settled life of an agriculturalist. With insignificant changes the description of the steps can be made applicable to the process of sedentarisation as a whole. 166X 178

Stages of Sedentarisation

1. The true desert Bedouin, raising mainly camels,[2] lives in a world where nature makes cultivation impossible. He migrates in accordance with the existence of water and grazing and supplements his meager income by raiding if conditions permit. He despises the villagers. 166X 221 434 361
2. In spite of the contempt that the Bedouin have for the settled peasants they come to realise that the fellah lives a more comfortable life and enjoys a better diet, compared to the standards of the nomad. 609 434
3. The next step is the occupation of cultivable land by the nomadic tribe. Agriculture is practiced only as a 166X 361 241

---

1. Kirkbride, 1945, March-April
2. Kirkbride does not discuss the Bedouin that came from Arabia subsisting exclusively on camel-breeding. Since practically all Transjordanian nomads have crossed the first stage, the conversion of exclusive camel economy to mixed pastoral economy of sheep and camel-breeding.

X166 supplemental means of livelihood. The tribesmen stay on
361 their fields only to harvest and then to sow next year's
241 crop. Then they migrate with their flocks in search of pastures. But they soon realise the drawbacks of protracted absence:

a. the grain will be eaten by birds and insects before it takes root

b. neighbors will graze their herds on the fields.

Sooner or later the amateur cultivator comes to the conclusion that it will pay him to remain nearer his land.

X166 4. The decision to remain close to the cultivated land
241 implies the first real change in the nomad's mode of living:

a. the radius of migration must be reduced

b. the restriction of movement, in turn, makes it mandatory to reduce the amount of livestock in proportion to the grazing areas within the limited wandering orbit.

c. the fewer the animals, the greater the dependence of the tribe on cultivation.

X166 At this phase the nomads still live in tents. But in
178 raising crops, they adopt more and more the methods of the sedentary neighbors.

437 In the trading of the surplus grain the behavior of the

---

BEDOUINS MJ4 SYR 19

agriculture was taking place on a small scale. During the latter part of the century the Wald Ali tribe began to take up cultivation near Homs and the Hesene in the Hauran.[1] 166 K 656

The leaders of the Syrian tribes, however, particularly the Anezeh and West Shammar sheikhs, benefited from Sultan Abdul Hamid's policy aiming at winning their support by gifts of land and villages. In 1870 Jed'an of the Fed'an obtained from the government several villages and large tracts of land.[2] Hajhem, the grandson of Jed'an, owns two villages on the Euphrates besides the property which he inherited from his grandfather. In the 1930's he acquired additional ground near 'Ain 'Isa where he built a house.[3] Nuri al-Sha'lan, the sheikh of the Rwala, owned substantial property consisting of vast estates, a house in Damascus and several motor-cars.[4] 622 425 656

Since the end of the First World War, all the important tribal leaders of Syria have been in possession of extensive land-holdings, and most of them have taken an increasing interest in cultivation. In 1928 Sheikh Selemieh of the Sba'a Anezeh undertook to restore an ancient system of canals and began tillage on land which had been heretofore desert.[5] In 1935 the sheikh of the Sba'a Bteimat doubled his cultivation in 622 423 241

---

1. Oppenheim, 1939, p. 75
2. ibid., p. 79
3. ibid., p. 81
4. ibid., pp. 105 seq.
5. Report, 1935, p. 106

SYRIA BEDOUINS MJ4

622 the region south-east of Aleppo. In the Jezirah the sheikh of
423 the Feda'an-Weld increased his tree plantations and experiments
241 of cotton cultivation.[1]

622 The estates of the tribal sheikhs are worked by fellahin
434 and settled nomads, but the considerable land-holdings of the
427 powerful Shammar and Aneseh chiefs are predominantly cultivated by fellahin while their tribesmen still continue to subsist on camel and sheep-breeding.[2]

622 Most of the tribal leaders have been anxious to obtain
653 for their people some of the amenities enjoyed by the sedentary
657 population. As result of their petitions to the Mandatory
658 Government, ancient wells were restored and new ones created, medical service was extended to Bedouin areas and public education made available to the tribes. The Services Hydrauliques sunk water wells in 1930/31 along the principal routes of Bedouin migration.[3] This service enabled the exploitation of pastures which had been heretofore out of the Bedouin's reach on account of the lack of water nearby. Infirmaries and dispensaries were established at the edge of the desert and at Palmyre. In 1931 three mobile hospitals were set up in Palmyre, Deir ez-Zor and Aleppo respectively. In 1930 two itinerary schools were added to the four already in existence to serve the EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE TRIBES.

1. Report, 1935, p. 106
2. Epstein, 1940, p. 77
3. Rapport, 1931, pp. 99-100

mently settled in the neighborhood of Homs and Hama. The Kmeese, (part of the Sba'a) began agriculture after the First World War.[1] The Hesene who had started cultivation already at the end of the 19th century,[2] are settling down in the villages which they own east of Homs.[3] Several thousand tribesmen of the Fed'an work in the fields belonging to the estates of their sheikh Mejhem, although the majority of the tribesmen prefer livestock-breeding to cultivation.[4] In the Jezirah, in Hauran, in the Homs-Hama-Aleppo region and in other parts of the country tribes are abandoning their nomadic mode of life and begin to engage in agriculture, first as supplementary, then as primary occupation. Ultimately they become fully settled peasants.

This process has been going on ever since the Bedouin have infiltrated into Syria. In recent years the slow pace of transition was somewhat quickened under the impact of rapidly changing conditions in Syria, but not as the result of economic adversities which plagued the nomads for a season or two. A catastrophe in the pastoral economy will not cause the Bedouin to turn to agricultural pursuits. After the drought years of 1931 and 1932 the situation of the Bedouin was desperate, but the abundant season of 1933 made the nomads forget the sufferings of preceding

---

1. Oppenheim, 1939, p. 85
2. ibid., p. 84
3. ibid., p. 85
4. Bassam, 1930, p. 496

361
241 years. There was not much of a response to the efforts of the
X166 government during 1934 and 1935 to encourage settlement on land.
178

Where sedentarisation took place it was the social process
X166 of assimilation, stimulated by economic, social and political
178 factors. Where societies meet, the phenomenon of assimilation is inevitable; one section of the social group may be more rapidly affected than the other, but even if no extraordinary conditions arise, the evolutionary process of assimilation and subsequent sedentarisation will take its course and ultimately embrace all strata of society.

361 Tribal leadership spearheaded the movement towards sedentar-
X166 isation which by 1935 was sufficiently advanced among the tribal groups of the Aleppo-Homs-Hama region for 14 tribes representing 3 500 tents or 15 000 individuals to be placed by the authorities under a regime of ordinary administration.[1)]

423 For those nomads who are at present ready to settle down,
425 the greatest problem is that of land-tenure. Bedouin tribes as a
X166 whole have more land at their disposal than they can possibly exploit by agricultural cultivation. The area inhabited by the nomads is not less than 10 693 000 hectares.[2)] However, when the tribesmen are willing to take up agriculture, they find that all the tribal land has become the private property of the sheikhs.

---

1. Rapport, 1936, pp. 26-27
2. Salem, 1950 p. 305

Jaberat, Hamajre and the Saidiyin. Until recently these nomads were chiefly engaged in sheep and goat rearing, while camel-breeding has been progressively abandoned.

Already in the 1930's all the Beersheba tribes were in an advanced stage of the process of transition to permanent settlement. While before the First World War the Negev Bedouin depended almost exclusively on stock-breeding, in 1931 42 868 of them claimed cultivation, and only 5 113 animal rearing, as their chief source of livelihood.[1]

This development was the result of a series of economic factors: the decline of the camel market,[2] successive years of drought and famine in the Negev,[3] the increased value attached to land in the wake of Zionist land purchases and the ready market that agricultural produce found in the growing Jewish settlements.

Many Bedouin began to attend to cultivation in a more regular fashion although they remained for the time being semi-nomads wandering with their flocks except for the seasons of sowing and harvesting.

The sheikhs and more prominent members of the tribes began

---

1. Report of 1931 census of Palestine
2. This loss was largely compensated by breeding other types of livestock.
3. More than half of the years 1874 - 1909 were seasons of drought. The war years 1914-18 constituted a continuous period of famine the severity of which the Negev had not experienced prior to the war. cf:
   עארף אל-עארף, 1938, ע' 150-151

342 as early as the 1930's to have stone houses constructed for their private use.[1]

361 During the years of prosperity in the middle of the 30's a
241 number of Bedouin groups in the Negev made use of mechanized harvesters which they borrowed from the Jewish colonists of Gederah.[2] Not all the tribesmen, however, were actively engaged in agriculture. As late as 1942 the Terabin had their lands cultivated by tenant farmers and day laborers from South Judean villages.[3]

X166 Among the Bedouin of Northern Palestine the trend towards
241 sedentarization dates back to the 1860's, when many of the tribes-
243 men began to engage in agriculture.[4] In the 1930's all the nomads of the Sharon, Jezreel and the Galilee were in the possession of land which was cultivated either by the tribesmen or tenant farmers.[5] Contrary to the Bedouin of the Beersheba district the nomads of Northern Palestine were quick to learn the value of law and order.[6] Under the influence of neighboring fellahin the tribesmen have become increasingly attached to the land and pre-occupied with agriculture. Although methods of cultivation remained very primitive, an improvement of conditions has been observed since the 1930's.[7]

---

1. Ashkenazi, 1938, p. 17
2. ibid.
3. Polink, 1942
4. Ashkenazi, 1938, p. 15
5. ibid., pp. 3-4
6. ibid., p. 16
7. ibid., p. 17

BEDOUINS M J 4
M1 Middle East
JORDAN

174 their nomadic life in the desert, raising camels, sheep and goats.

The first to become interested in agriculture was Sheikh Sattan ibn Fais. Although he personally remained a wandering nomad with his Beni Sakhr tribesmen, he attended to the supervision of his estates at Umm el-'Amad, north east of Madabah.

361 Père Jaussen reported in 1908[1] that already at that time
• 241 small tribes[2] of Gilead, the Jordan valley, Belqa and northern Moab were engaged in agricultural work.

423 Most of the cultivable tracts of the tribal land had already
425 prior to the First World War become the private property of the sheikhs who acquired those lands simply by occupying them[3] as they belonged to nobody. Another method of increasing land-holdings was by encroachment on adjacent fields and putting them under cultivation. By this latter system a large territory, originally belonging to the Adwan, was acquired by Sheikh Sattan and his sons.[4] After World War I many sheikhs purchased Giftlik land[5] from the government on favorable terms.

---

1. Jaussen, 1908, pp. 237-8 and pp. 240-55
2. All the tribes of Transjordan are small when compared with the powerful Iraqi and Syrian tribes such as the Ruala (4 250 tents) or the Sba'a (3 400 tents) cf. Fisher, 1950, p. 116. The Beni Sakhr, the largest tribe of Transjordan, has about 1 140 tents.
3. They set foot on a certain terrain, belonging to nobody ( ارض سبسبة ) and declared it personal property ( ارض سبيبة ) by virtue of occupation.
4. Jaussen, 1908, pp. 136-7
5. Giftlik is the land which had belonged to the Turkish Sultan and become government property after World War I.

JORDAN BEDOUINS MJ4

The Mandatory Report of 1 29 stated [1] that there was a marked tendency among the nomads of Transjordan to settle, especially among the Beni Sakhr who owned a considerable area of land. [2] The same document points out, however, that the tribesmen are not yet engaged in cultivation, but employ fellahin to till the soil for them. A. Konikoff who published a study of the Transjordan economy about fifteen years after the above quoted report has nothing new to add [3] implying that no material change has taken place.

166x 427

In spite of substantial land-holdings, most members of the Beni Sakhr seem not yet psychologically prepared to settle down.

166x 241 425

The case of the Howeitat, the second most powerful tribe of Transjordan, [4] is different. Unlike the majority of the Bedouin the Howeitat do not show the traditional contempt for agriculture. [5] They cultivate all the fertile land in their tribal area. The agricultural activities of the Howeitat increased considerably when they acquired the Shar'ah plain from the Ba'alnat tribe during the latter part of the 19th century. The tribesmen practiced a mixed economy consisting of tillage and livestock-

BREEDING.

---

1. Report, 1929 b, p. 138
2. They possess about 24 villages, whose land is tilled by fellahin and tenants (cf. Speiser, 1930, p. 237). The tribe is scattered from the hills of Belqa to Wadi Shisham and from Amman to Madeibah.
3. Konikoff, 1946, p. 30
4. The Howeitat have about 1 000 tents and dwell in the Wadi and Aqaba region.
5. The Howeitat did not originally come from the Hejaz or the Nejd. It is alleged that the tribe has always been connected with the Transjordan territory. One theory suggests that the Howeitat are the descendants of ancient Nabateans, another considers them the offspring of camel merchants from the Red Sea coast and fellahin from Hegra and Tayma who in the course of time became Bedouin. (cf. Oppenheim, 1943, p. 29)

M1 Middle East
BEDOUINS MJ4
JORDAN

breeding.

361 A decisive change in the opposite direction occurred in the
241 economic structure of the Howeitat when their two Sheikhs Ab'am
721 ibn-Jazi and Audah abu-Tayy evinced more interest in raiding them in peaceful agricultural pursuits. In a short time the Howeitat became one of the most warlike tribes in North Arabia and the Syrian Desert. Cultivation was discarded, the tribesmen ruled their former fellahin and tenants, and they themselves roamed the desert.[1]

X 166 Since the end of the First World War the Howeitat have been
● 241 reverting to the land. The tribesmen again engaged in the agricultural work, and their transition to a completely settled existence should not be difficult to accomplish.

423 By 1931 all sections of the Beni Hasan[2] were settled on their
X 166 land, in that year 5 000 title deeds having been issued to the
241 tribal cultivators.[3] In the drought years of 1932 and 1933 the flocks of the Beni Hasan were severely hit. Like the situation among all the big tribes of Transjordan, the Beni Hasan were occasionally raised, but unlike them they were willing to take up cultivation. Government financial assistance was requested to enable the tribe to develop its fertile lands, but no constructive help was forthcoming.

---

1. Père Jaussen observed the Howeitat in 1908 after they had resumed their nomadic existence. But his statement that "les Howeitat n'ont jamais touché la charrue" (The Howeitat never touched the plow) (cf. Jaussen, 1908, p. 241) is incorrect.
2. The Beni Hasan have about 860 tents and dwell in 'Ajlun, one of the most fertile parts of Transjordan. They own about 372 000 dunums of land.
3. Report, 1931, p. 193

Jordan BEDOUINS MJ4

The Bedouin settlement policy of the Transjordan Government

Since 1931 it has been the policy of the government to create favorable conditions for settlement, rather than to sponsor and carry out definite sedentarization projects. The governmental policy of encouragement was implemented by financial aid and technical assistance to the tribes, and by bringing education to the Bedouin areas.

After the two successive years of severe drought (1931 and 1932) the Beni Sakhr were granted in 1935 a governmental subsidy of LP 250 to encourage cultivation on tribal land.[1] In 1934 the administration gave the Howeitat LP 1 000 to start agriculture in the area between Ma'an and Shobeila.[2] In 1935 they were granted another LP 500 for the same purpose.[3]

Besides the meager financial help the tribes were given technical advice and assistance. In 1934 the government planted 1 600 palm suckers in the experimental garden at Bagoora in the Jordan valley and 600 in the oasis at Azraq for the instruction of the Bedouin.[4] To encourage citriculture 4 500 citrus trees were grafted from the Bagoora station and distributed among the nomads who had evinced an interest in agriculture.[5] The Department of Agriculture guided and helped the Bedouin to plant these trees. Desert schools were started in 1935, one permanently established at el-Jaffar in the Ma'an district which is the central location

---

1. Report, 1935, p. 307
2. Report, 1934, p. 261
3. Report, 1935, p. 307
4. Report, 1934, p. 262
5. Report, 1937, p. 362

658 for the southern tribes of Transjordan. The second desert school follows the movement of the northern tribes, classes being alternately held at Muaqqar and at Azraq, both in the Amman district.[1]

X166 In general it must be stated that the creation of suitable
656 conditions for tribal settlement was attempted on a scale which
241 was wholly inadequate, the chief obstacles being the lack of a concrete policy and the financial means to implement it. Nevertheless, in Transjordan, the majority of the nomads are actually ready to settle down if the opportunity is given them. Larger tribes such as the Howeitat and Beni Hasan are increasingly practicing agriculture as their main occupation. Smaller tribes, living in northern Kerak, have always held cultivation in high esteem.[2] Tribesmen from Belqa are engaged as agricultural laborers on the estates of the Beni Sakhr,[3] although most sheikhs of the Jordan tribes have their lands worked by permanent tenants, fellahin who come from the Nablus and Hebron areas of Palestine.[4]

178 Summary of the Bedouin settlement movement in the area
X166

a. spontaneous socio-economic change

The internal, sociological change among the nomads is the ever-operating phenomenon of assimilation to the settled society which they contact.

How the transition gradually occurs among the tribes

---

1. Report, 1938, p. 351
2. Jaussen, 1908, p. 243
3. Epstein, 1938, p. 233
4. Poliak, 1942

BEDOUINS MJ4
566
622

members of his tribe. Besides collecting the taxes for the central government he imposes and collects his own levies.[1]

Of course, there are exceptions to the general pattern. There is, for example, the case of the Bedouin tribe Abu Kishk that owned 20 000 dunums of land in the Sharon.[2] The sheikh's family in whose name the land was registered, sold 10 000 dunums to the Jews. The whole tribe benefited from this transaction. Part of the money was invested in a 145 dunam orange plantation and used to dig new wells, part of it was distributed among the individual members who were thus enabled to exchange their tents for stone houses. Enough cash was left for building a school. The social, economic and sanitary conditions of the entire tribe were thus greatly improved by the actions of the tribal sheikh.

622
566
423
425
425
311
871

## CHAPTER XI

### Attitude of the Tribesmen towards Settlement

The Bedouin's traditional contempt for agriculture will not be changed, before he is psychologically conditioned for sedentary life. Economic disasters and subsequent starvation will not in themselves materially alter this attitude. After the drought seasons of 1931 and 1932 the situation of the Transjordan Bedouin was desperate; 1946/47 was likewise a year of deficient rainfall in Transjordan when about 50 per cent of the livestock perished.[3] But still we do not hear of a great number of Beni Sakhr tribesmen

241
731

---

1. Himadeh, 1930, p. 430
2. Ashkenazi, 1938, pp. 18-19
3. Losses amounted to sheep and goats — 40%, cattle — 45%, camels — 50%. cf. Final Report, part 2, 1949, p. 10

241 731 that were willing to engage in agriculture after the economic catastrophes of either the early 30's or the late 40's, because this tribal group is not yet ready for settlement. Similarly in Syria, as has been pointed out above, the calamitous season 1931/32 did not appreciably accelerate sedentarization. While the experienced Bedouin will take livestock losses and subsequer starvation in the desert as a matter of course, the novice cultivator will not face a harvest failure with the same equanimity. X166 731 In 1936 many Transjordan nomads had taken up cultivation for the first time, but the loss of their crops discouraged them so much, that they returned to the desert.[1]

X241 X166 178 Profound changes are, nevertheless, taking place in the mentality of the Bedouin. As a result of tribal disintegration many nomads have become increasingly interested in sedentary life. When the nomad sees the sheikh, alienated from the tribe, enjoy luxuries beyond his dreams, he may also want to improve his standard of living and enjoy the "comforts" of the settled villager whose existence is prosperous compared by the Bedouin's standard of life. Pride may keep the nomad from working on the land, but nevertheless there are now hundreds of Iraqi and Syrian villages inhabited by people who were formerly nomads. Some of them still maintain tribal customs although they have been settled for a long time and severed the relations with their original tribes.[2]

---

1. Report, 1936, p. 349
2. El-Shihaby, 1950, pp. 278 seq.

BEDOUINS MJ4

177
178

## Social transformation of the Bedouin

When the Bedouin settle down, they gradually adopt the fellah's mode of living. As their contact with village and city increases, they become familiar with modern implements, matches, oil-lamps, etc.

241 ●
166x
178
511

The Ghawarneh of Northern Palestine, for example, live like peasants engaged in intensive cultivation.[1] They grow rice, maize and peas. The women are occupied with mat weaving, the men join them in this work during the slack season in the fields. They still dress like Bedouin, and most of them live in huts. There are stone houses in which the family chiefs dwell.[2] After settlement, Bedouin customs and habits give way gradually to those of the fellahin.

In the Khiss-Finn refugee camp (southern Syria) there are Arab refugees who claim to be members of tribes that lived until recently in Upper Galilee, around Lake Tiberias, near Nazareth and Safed. In July 1949, an inquiry was conducted among the members of the camp concerning tribal habits and health conditions.[3] The members of the tribes were agricultural folk, some small traders and artisans. A part of them used to live permanently in stone houses, others dwelt in houses during the winter months, in tents during the harvesting season. In a number of tribes only the wealthy had houses, the poorer members lived permanently in tents. Most of the tribal people were settled, one group for only 50 to 70 years.

342
166x

---

1. This was the situation prior to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948.
2. Ashkenazi, 1938, p. 46
3. Cotwall, 1950

BEDOUINS MJ4

Economic

361
233
178
241

The Pastoral economy of the Bedouin [1] has been seriously affected by the rapid development of the area. Former pasture lands are increasingly brought under cultivation with subsequent restriction of tribal grazing areas.

Although an exaggerated significance has been attached to the effects of the declining demand for the camel, this factor has dealt a severe blow to the economy of the true desert Bedouin who subsisted in the past exclusively on camel-breeding.

Social

178
621

Tribal society has progressively disintegrated as the result of the sheikh's emergence as a big landowner. The interest which tribal leadership displays in agricultural life, is bound to influence the thinking and acting of the tribesmen. Sooner or later, they will follow the examples set by their sheikhs and settle down.

---

1. The statement of Alfred Bonne that "the term Bedouin economy is a contradiction in itself" and that "this economy is no economy in the accepted sense of the word" (Bonne, 1948, p. 346) may be exaggerated because the nomads make a valuable contribution to the economy by:
   a. profitably utilizing the scanty patches of grass that grow for fleeting moments over widely separated stretches of desert area, a resource which would remain otherwise exploited
   b. by supplying the people of the area with their needs of meat, wool and dairy products
   c. producing for local industry and export trade items like wool, skins, hides, and live animals and their edible produce.

True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar but flavoured with herbs; and its consumption is the occasion of much social activity—the rounding off of the day, and an opportunity for discussion, and the reception of guests. For the Badawin, if not for city dwellers, coffee is truly the 'wine of Islam', and the equipment of all Badawin households includes at least one carpet, which is spread before the hearth, a mortar, and coffee pots and cups. A few cooking pots, and one or two large trays and bowls for communal eating make up the remainder of the culinary equipment.

Clothing of the Badawin is simple. A long robe of thick material is the principal, sometimes in fact the only, garment. In winter a waterproof cloak of woven camel hair is worn. A voluminous headcloth, held in place by a rope or band, is wound round the head so as to give protection to the face and neck, and rawhide, heelless sandals are worn on the feet.

Water is usually too precious for much washing[1]—indeed, the Koran permits the ceremonial use of sand in the daily ablutions which are enjoined on all Moslems—and animal urine is frequently used as a substitute. Badawin food is monotonous and scanty. Most important are milk products: curds, buttermilk, various kinds of cheese—of which *labné*, a kind of cream cheese, is the most widespread—and *samné*, or butter. In addition, wheat, barley, and occasionally a little rice are obtained by barter, blackmail, or brigandage from agriculturalists, or else grown very sporadically by the nomads themselves.[2] Small amounts of dried fruit, usually dates, are also eaten. Meat is provided only as a great luxury, since animals themselves are in effect a kind of fixed capital—owners must live from the yield, not upon the animal itself. Apart, then, from occasions of high festival, when special slaughtering takes place, only those animals that die naturally are eaten.

Meals are served first to the older men of the tent, each man using his dagger as a knife, and fingers as a fork,[3] after which, when they are satisfied, it is the turn of the younger men and boys. Later still come the women, and finally the girls—the sexes never intermingling during meals. On occasion when supplies are plentiful, the Badawin

[1] It has been said of a present-day certain Wahhabi tribe of Arabia that all adult members have at least once in their lifetime been forced to exist on water taken from the hump of a camel.

[2] Patches of ground are roughly sown with grain, and later in the year tribesmen return to harvest the crop.

[3] As far as possible, use of the left hand is avoided in polite Arab society—this hand is employed for menial and unpleasant tasks.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4
Muntafiq



water), and so forth, until he had completed the tale of the road. Armed with the information he had gained, he led the Bani Malik to Safwan, where they overthrew and almost exterminated the 'Ajwad, sparing only a handful of men and forty women, or according to another version of the story forty women with child. The remnant, whatever may have been its composition, took refuge in the Hawizah marshes, but returned after a short period to 'Iraq, where they were joined by the Budur, who claim descent from the Ruwalah 'Anizah, the Shuraifat, a tribe of Southern Arabian origin (Qahtan), and the Juwarin, long settled in Mesopotamia. Shabib, by virtue of his relationship with the Al Khusaubah and his military powers, had assumed the leadership of the Bani Malik, and to him the 'Ajwad addressed themselves with proposals of peace. He demanded for the killing of his father no payment of blood money, but that he should be accorded the honours of overlord, that they should kiss his hand when they approached him, and that he should not be required to rise in response to their salutation. To this stipulation, which was regarded as an instance of high generosity, they agreed, and the Bani Malik and 'Ajwad, united under one chief, made so formidable a combination that they attracted a third ally, the Bani Sa'id, a tribe of the Jazirah. These three formed and still form the Muntafiq league.

The three divisions as we know them are not tribes, but tribal groups. The Bani Sa'id, who are by far the smallest, appear to be the most cohesive. Their district lies in little-known country in the desert between the Tigris and the Gharraf. Though they own some cultivation of the tail of the great canals they would seem to approach the Badawin more closely in their mode of life than is the case with the other two members of the league, and their constituents have the character of sections of a homogeneous tribe rather than that of independent units gathered into a confederacy.

The 'Ajwad are the least compact. Their country is on the Gharraf, and the Euphrates above and below Nasiriyah; they are therefore much more accessible. They are riverain Arabs of the Shawiyah type (Shawâwi), half-settled cultivators and half-nomadic owners of flocks. They spend the late winter, spring and early summer in the desert with their sheep, leaving some of their number in the reed villages by the rivers to till the fields.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4
Muntafiq



villages by the rivers to till the fields. They have no camels but use donkeys as their transport animals; the presence of large herds of donkeys is as distinctive of Shawiyah encampments in the desert as is that of grazing camels indication of the proximity of Badawin tents. By the Badawin they are regarded with not over-tolerant contempt, and though some of the Shawiyah, notably the Budur, are bold fighting men, no true nomad would intermarry with them. They have been dubbed felicitously in English Donkey Badawin

The 'Ajwad seem to have lost almost entirely the sense of confederacy. A member of one of their component tribes, if asked to define himself, would invariably give the name of his tribal unit, though when questioned more closely he would admit that his tribe formed part of the 'Ajwad as opposed to the Bani Sa'id or the Bani Malik. In former times, when the Muntafiq coalition was much more completely under the control of the Sa'adun than it is now, the latter appointed the family of Manna, Sunnis of Hijazi origin like themselves, as inferior headmen over the 'Ajwad, for which reason the group is sometimes known as 'Ajwad al Manna. The Manna, who are said to be of Arab stock, still occupy a titular position as chiefs. If a capable member of the family happened to be available he would be the natural leader in battle, and in an assembly of 'Ajwad shaikhs, Zamil al Manna, the present head of the house, would be given the highest place, but they have no executive power or tribal jurisdiction. The Al Wathal, once paramount, are still in existence, but they have fallen into unimportance.

The Bani Malik, though less homogeneous than the Bani Sa'id, are more closely knit than the 'Ajwad. They are mainly cultivators (Filih, Harrathah, Hadhr) and Ma'dan, men of the marsh who live by fishing, by the weaving of reed mats and by the breeding of buffaloes. Just as Zamil al Manna' is nominally leader of the 'Ajwad, so Badr al Rumaiyidh is chief of the Bani Malik, but whereas the Al Manna' are not 'Iraqi tribesmen, the Al Rumaiyidh are the paramount clan of a strong tribe of the Bani Malik, the Albu Salih, to which their real authority is restricted. Outside the limits of the Muntafiq league there are large bodies of the Bani Malik on the lower Tigris and in the Hawizah of common origin with the Bani Malik of the Euphrates. It is probable that at one time all were part of a single entity. Such

camels to draw up the water, but the southern Bedu always lift it by hand. They fasten a leather bucket, holding about four gallons, to either end of the rope which runs over the pulley, so that as one bucket is drawn up full the other descends empty. Men and women draw together on the well-ropes, four or five to each rope, singing in chorus as they work. We had not been here long before the camel herds arrived and the serious work of watering began. Great leather troughs supported on crossed wooden hoops were set up by each family around the well. Soon there was no room for more watering parties, and late-comers had to wait their turn. The buckets rose and fell and were tipped into the troughs about which the thirsty camels pushed and thrust while their calves frolicked around. Shouting herdboys, stripped to the waist, ran in and out among them, driving away camels which did not belong to them, and restraining the more impatient of their own. Others scratched the hind-quarters of their favourite beasts, while they sang them their watering songs to induce them to drink deep. When they had drunk they were couched nearby, to be watered again later in the day, before being driven back to pasturage. Round the well-mouth women filled their water-skins, which then lay swollen and quivering upon the ground, guarded from the trampling feet of the camels by shrill-voiced little girls, clad only in a leather fringe around their waists. Few of the women were veiled and all joined freely in the constant jests and laughter. Among them was a tall girl of startling beauty. She had come down to the well early in the day, carrying a water-skin and accompanied by her young sister. The centre of a happy laughing group of lads, she dallied here till the evening.

A family of Sa'ar from off the mountains were camped under an overhanging cliff nearby, and they bade us join them and drink coffee. Kinsmen of the Bin Ma'aruf, they yet differed from them in their dress and way of life. They wore indigo-dyed loincloths and wraps around their shoulders, as is the fashion among the Southern Bedu, whereas the Bin Ma'aruf were clad like the Northern Arabs in long white shirts whose pointed sleeves fell nearly to the ground. They were returning to their homes in Raidat al Sa'ar, a two days' journey to the south. Floodcrops of sorghum and beans are grown there in a shallow valley, guarded by numerous stone-built forts and watch-towers, which look out across the desolate rocky plateau. Raidat is seldom visited by other Arabs, for it is the very stronghold of the Sa'ar, who have an evil reputation for treachery.